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[357] traditional games of wrestling, running, tug-of-
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542 war, sack-racing and various ball games. A
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517 real interest in sports in general, however, did not arise until the beginning of this century, especially after the spectacular success of Finnish long-distance runners and other athletes in the Olympic Games in Stockholm in 1912. The most popular sports in Finland are the ball games, i.e. soccer, ice-hockey and the national form of baseball, after which come skiing, track and field, gymnastics, swimming, path-finding, wrestling and boxing, cycling and skating. Track and field, in which Finland held second place after the United States in all the Olympic Games until the London event in 1948, are the special favorites of the public, and the large international competitions gather a large

526 number of spectators. Cross-country skiing is
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517 a real everyman's sport, popular among old and young alike. In some rural districts skis are still an indispensable means of communication in winter time, and near the cities there are innumerable tracks in the forest for those who ski for pleasure. The school children are given a week's vacation for skiing each winter, and older people are urged to continue their practice.

A large number of Finnish sportsmen have achieved international fame, especially in track and field, skiing, wrestling and skating. They have come from all layers of society, farmers and workers being especially well represented among them.

The favorite sport occasions among the